

IN THE CLAIMS

Claims 1, 2, 5, 6, and 8 have been amended. New Claims 17-19 have been added. The italicized claims are the remaining claims which have not been amended in this Response and are provided for the Examiner's reading convenience.

B1

1. (Twice Amended) An applicator for applying a coating substance to a stent, comprising

- a body portion;
- a nozzle, including an orifice, extending from the body portion; and
- a temperature controller coupled to the nozzle, the temperature controller being coupled to the nozzle in close proximity to the orifice so as to change the temperature of a coating substance as it passes through the orifice, wherein the temperature controller is sized so as to change the temperature of the coating substance at a concentrated area of the nozzle so as to prevent exposure of the coating substance to the change in temperature along the entire length of the body portion.

2. (Amended) The applicator of Claim 1, wherein the temperature controller circumscribes a portion of the nozzle.

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3. *The applicator of Claim 1, wherein the coating substance includes a polymer dissolved in a solvent and optionally a therapeutic substance added thereto.*

Claim 4 was canceled without prejudice in the Response dated January 17, 2003.

B2

5. (Amended) An apparatus for applying a composition to a stent during a coating process, comprising:

- (a) an applicator for spraying a composition at the stent; and
- (b) a temperature controller connected to the applicator and configured to adjust the temperature of the composition to a temperature other than ambient temperature in a

concentrated area during the application process to prevent prolonged thermal exposure of the composition.

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control

6. (Amended) The apparatus of Claim 5, wherein the applicator comprises a body extending into a nozzle, such that the temperature controller is positioned in close proximity to an orifice of the nozzle through which the coating substance is sprayed, and wherein the temperature controller does not extend along the entire length of the body of the applicator to prevent prolonged exposure of composition to the temperature controller.

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7. *The apparatus of Claim 5, wherein the applicator is an air-assisted internal or external mixing atomizer.*

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8. (Twice Amended) The apparatus of Claim 5, additionally including a temperature modulator in communication with the temperature controller for maintaining the temperature of the composition at a constant level during the application process.

Claims 9-16 were canceled without prejudice in the Response dated January 17, 2003.

[Please add the following New Claims:]

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17. (New) The applicator of Claim 1, wherein the temperature controller is a heat source.

18. (New) The apparatus of Claim 5, wherein the temperature controller is a heat source.

19. (New) The apparatus of Claim 6, wherein the temperature controller circumscribes a portion of the periphery of the orifice.